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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 KUWAIT 004433

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KU](#) [KDMR](#)

SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION AUGUST 18-24

SUMMARY: Harsh criticism of the recent US UNSC veto is evident on the op/ed pages of Kuwait's Arabic dailies, with numerous denunciations of "American arrogance and double standards" in the Arab world, and attendant calls to reevaluate the US-Kuwait bilateral relationship.

Tensions between Kuwaiti Islamists and liberals have come to the fore over the Ministry of Information's decision to allow a pop music concert by young Arab singers over the objections of religious conservatives. Despite opposition (including a peaceful demonstration of 50 Islamists and a bomb hoax) concert tickets were sold out. Several liberal NGOs issued statements rejecting the Islamists' effort to "exercise control over society by resorting to intellectual terrorism." End summary.

Reportage

All newspapers published a statement by the Islamic Salafi movement denouncing the Central Bank's compliance with a State Department request to freeze the accounts of Islamic Jihad and Hamas. The movement described the act as an example of "Zionist infiltration" of Kuwait.

Al-Seyassa reported that a former Iraqi soldier who claims to have been ordered to kill 40 Kuwaiti POWs is attempting to claim \$1 million offered by the Kuwaiti government to anyone who could direct Kuwait authorities to the whereabouts of the POWs.

All newspapers gave prominent coverage to reports that two Muslim members of the US military have been accused of espionage in Guantanamo.

Al-Qabas published a report indicating extreme violations in executing criminal sentences. According to these documents, there are 13,000 criminal sentences that have not been implemented in Kuwait, with many accused of serious crimes walking the streets.

All newspapers reported the death of a Kuwaiti F-18 pilot whose plane crashed near Ahmed Al-Jaber Airbase. An investigation is ongoing to discover the cause of the crash.

Al-Seyassa & Al-Qabas reported that a senior Shiite Cleric, Mohammed Al-Mahri, issued a fatwa arguing that raising the Israeli flag in Dubai is "haram" or religiously forbidden and so is trading with Israel.

Al-Rai Al-Aam reported that the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs is sending a delegation to the United States to visit Islamic centers and organizations from October 2-[19](#).

Al-Rai Al-Aam reported that the United States has asked Kuwait for the privilege of participating in the Al-Zoor power plant project and has also requested priority for American companies in the Northern Oil Fields project. Sources noted that this request follows a Kuwait response to be named one of America's major non-NATO allies.

Al-Qabas published a report by the International Committee to combat terrorism which reveals that Kuwaiti laws for monitoring the financial transactions of charitable organizations are insufficient. The committee forwarded several questions to the Ministry of Social Affairs with a 90 day deadline to answer them.

Al-Qabas reported that Ministry of Social Affairs is preparing to wage a comprehensive campaign on charity organizations to confirm that they are abiding by regulations.

Editorials:

[13](#). "Towards a Democratic Position"

Liberal Abdul-Latif Al-Duaij wrote in independent Al-Qabas

(9/21): "The legitimacy of holding the Super Star concert is inspired from Kuwait's democratic system and from the constitution which guarantees individual freedoms and commits the country to foster different forms of art. Whether the concert is or isn't popular among Kuwaitis this is besides the point. The point is that it is my right and the rights of others to attend and enjoy the concert. This same argument is true for granting women political rights.. Reexamining these issues is similar to scorning the principles of our democratic constitution."

14. "Slave traders of the Twenty First Century"
Former Minister and MP, liberal Ahmed Al-Baghli wrote in independent Al-Qabas (9/23): "International laws forbid human trafficking and impose strong penalties for countries suspected of such a horrific trade.. As someone who is concerned with human rights issues, I am always encountering accusations made against Kuwait for mistreating expatriate labor, especially domestic servants.. What supports such accusations is an add that recently ran in a local advertising newspaper which states 'for sale, a Filipino Muslim maid for KD 350, price is negotiable.'.. We can on Kuwaiti authorities and officials to put an end to such inhumane and irresponsible acts committed by fellow Kuwaitis and published in our newspapers. Those who published such an ad did not fear any punishment, that is why they went ahead with their act."

15. "After the two parties"
Prominent Islamist Mohammed Al-Shaibani wrote in independent Al-Qabas (9/23): "The coming few days will witness a very strong conflict between the liberals and the Islamists, perhaps stronger than any time before. The conflict aims at establishing political hegemony. The liberals may achieve some victories, especially since Kuwait has become a major US non-Nato ally. Islamists, on the other hand, may lose a lot if they do not deal with their local issues with calmness and rationale. They must also cooperate with the legislative and the executive authorities, especially since the government has not yet given its view on issues raised by the Islamists and when it does, such views may be too harsh on them."

16. "Enthusiasm for their Injustice"
Islamist Adel Al-Qassar wrote in independent Al-Qabas (9/23): "Ongoing American charities estimated at billions of dollars are sent to Israeli Jews to enable them to maintain the land they usurped and to exercise brutality and oppression against the Palestinian fighters. Meanwhile, terrorism has now become synonymous with Islam and Muslims and now accusations are made against their charitable organizations to dry the sources of their funding and eliminate their existence. Fostering an orphan, helping the poor, feeding the hungry, and financing the families of martyrs in Palestine are now considered terrorist acts punishable by law. Now in Kuwait we are faced with an American request to freeze the assets of Palestinian resistance groups. The decision to stop all aid is absolute to include 'all financial and moral assistance.' Now we are left to wonder what constitutes moral assistance, unless this includes praying that God may relieve the oppressed and praying at the funerals of martyrs? What is left that we are authorized to do other than eat and sleep like animals?"

17. "Take Two"
Bader Khaled Al-Bahar wrote in independent Al-Qabas (9/23): "Hollywood's scenario in the Middle East have become very clear. It starts with an Arab country clashing interests with the U.S., or in reality, the Hebrew state. This is followed by an attack and a reaction to an attack. This is followed by condemnation of terrorism, an accusation of ownership of WMDs and an embargo and an air raid. The last episode involves chaos, the disappearance of the criminal who turns into an evil spirit that continues to haunt the hero with video taped messages. Such was the scenario in Afghanistan, Libya and in Iraq.. Take four will be in Damascus because Syria is accused with all the factors that qualifies her to become the hero for the new American scenario. It refuses to negotiate with Israel and according to US claims, it harbors the terrorists of Hezbollah and Jihad and Hamas and develops WMDs.. The fifth take will be in Saudi Arabia because 15 of the 19 perpetrators of September 11 were Saudis and a recent report prepared by Congress links the Kingdom with terrorism."

18. "A Strategic Ally"
Dr. Hasan Abdullah Abbas wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (9/23): "In his recent press conference from Kuwait, Secretary Powell announced that Kuwait played a prominent

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role in the war to liberate (occupy) Iraq and it is therefore a "strategic" non-Nato ally.. The stubbornness and challenge the US faces in the region has become unacceptable and has necessitated forming "strategic" non-NATO alliances. The Americans want an effective element

within Arab and Islamic countries able to influence and facilitate passing American policies in the region. Do our Kuwaiti officials accept such a label? I would like to remind our politicians that Kuwait is still part of the Islamic world. I would also like to remind them that the U.S. is preparing a new project that antagonizes Arab and Islamic countries, the most prominent of which are Syria and Iran.. Let us also remember that the U.S. is still the official international and official umbrella for acts and killings perpetrated by the Zionist entity against the Palestinian children."

9. "The Dinosaur and the Swamp"

Conservative Academician Dr. Jassim Al-Fuhaid wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (9/23): "There is are better words to describe America other than what Iranian leader Rafsanjani used when he compared it to a dinosaur with a bird's brain. This dinosaur's dilemma is multi-faceted. While politicians are still trying to figure out how to govern Iraq, the military nature of the US presence there sheds doubt as to the nature of the alleged liberation. Excessive use of force with the Iraqi people, has led to increasing the antagonism with the Iraqis.. Also, excessive arrogance has led the U.S. into more conflicts.. America is now attempting to draw its allies to pay for its expensive bill for occupying Iraq, but it is met with continuous resistance because no one wants to fall in the Iraqi swamp."

10. "The Foolish Veto"

Shiite MP Abdul-Mohsen Yousef Jamal wrote in independent Al-Qabas (9/20): "I do not know what constitutes the moral basis of the recent U.S. veto in the UNSC which aimed at putting a stop to the Israeli foolishness that has transcended all taboos of killing and destructions. The U.S. veto represents American recklessness in dealing with humanitarian values and a disrespect for the lives of innocent Palestinians killed daily by Israeli raids waged using American planes.. American arrogance has reached a level of foolishness by allowing the criminal Sharon to kill anyone he wants without being held accountable and to violate human rights without punishment.. Washington is trying to make it clear to the Arab and Muslim worlds that its is that sole superpower and that it dictates the rules of the political game, even if this means killing innocent people.. It is telling the Palestinians that no country will come to your aid and that they must accept American conditions, or in other words, Israeli conditions. Meanwhile, Washington is sending a clear message to Tel Aviv that whatever Israel does to the Palestinians, America will support it in the Security Council."

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